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MOVING TOWARD SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT:

School Districts Create an Environment for Change

September, 1993

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School Districts Create an Environment for Change

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Dear Colleagues:

This publication is part of the Department of Education's ongoing efforts to identify, analyze and disseminate strategies that promise to improve the management of schools and the academic achievement of students. Specifically, this report describes the first year experiences of four Massachusetts school systems that are taking some first steps to reinvent school governance in order to enable individual schools to assume more authority and responsibility for the educational success of their students.

Empowering individual schools to be more responsible is the hallmark of reform strategies that have assumed several different labels -- school-based management, site-based decision making, restructuring, etc. All these strategies place the school at the center of the change and the decision making process. in this process, however, the roles of the superintendent and the central administration in facilitating school-based change have often been under-appreciated.

The change efforts in the four Leadership Sites that are the focus of this report provide an exception. Their experiences, as chronicled in this report, show the necessity for complementary changes and represent a dynamic interaction of changes at the restructuring at both levels, that of central administration and the school site. The four sites were chosen to pilot these changes. They were selected from a network of 90 plus school systems whose superintendents have been participating in the School-Based Improvement Project, (SBIP). Through their three-year professional development program, superintendents have enhanced their understanding of site-based decision making and been supported to implement educational reforms in their school districts. SBIP has sponsored conferences and seminars made possible, in part, by generous support from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation of Morristown, New Jersey.

We are grateful to the administrators, teachers, and parents in the four Leadership Sites who agreed to be extensively interviewed for this publication. Their insights into and reflection upon their practices and their candor make it possible for readers of this booklet to benefit from their experience.

If you would like further information on school-based management, please contact Massachusetts Department of Education's Center for Innovation at 617-388-3300 x211.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. CONTEXT: THE SCHOOL-BASED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SBIP)

The School-Based Improvement Project (SBIP), a joint venture of the Office of Community Education of the Massachusetts Department of Education and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), provided 97 competitively selected Massachusetts public school superintendents with enhanced knowledge and skills for promoting school-based management in their school systems. Through this four-year program, superintendents have been working together in colloquia workshops and seminars, in small support groups, and as one-on-one peer coaching partners to explore concepts of leadership and their applications to school reform.

Support for the SBIP has been provided by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation of Morristown, New Jersey, as well as other private sector contributions.

The superintendents of the four school systems that are the subject of this report are participating in the SBIP. These districts include Fall River, Shrewsbury, Springfield, and Triton Regional (Newbury, Rowley, and Salisbury).

II. SBIP LEADERSHIP SITES

Four Leadership Sites were selected to serve as laboratories for developing field-tested practices that promote effective school-based management. These four sites were chosen on the basis of their superintendents' commitment to apply the lessons of the SBIP colloquia to local practice.

Each Leadership Site designated a "lead school" that would break new ground in practices of school-based management and participatory governance. At the same time, Leadership Site superintendents are modeling changes at the central office level that are needed to facilitate school-based management, both in the lead school, and throughout the system.

In connection with their selection as Leadership Sites, the four Leadership Site school districts received recognition for their initiatives as well as technical assistance and support. This support included:

- Site-specific assistance from a team of organizational development consultants from Digital Equipment Corporation (two consultants are assigned to each site).

- A series of seminars provided by Peter Senge, of the management consulting firm Innovation Associates, for superintendents and other school district managers on applying systems dynamics and the theory of "learning organizations."

- Workshops on action-research and inquiry-based school change for teams of principals, teachers, parents and community members from the lead schools, provided by the Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands.

- The services of a "critical friend" who was also the documentor and author of this report. A "critical friend" is a knowledgeable outsider who helps the "insider" practitioners by asking meaningful questions that lead to reflection and the improvement of practice.

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This report documents the first year of activity of the SBIP Leadership Sites at both the district and school-site levels and suggests lessons for future restructuring work at these and other school sites. A companion report is available which describes action-research training provided by The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands for the Leadership Site teams.

Each of the Leadership Sites chronicled for this report was in its first year of a three-year project. Field research was conducted in the period between January and June of 1992. These outcomes are, accordingly, formative and preliminary. The schools began the year at different stages of experience with school-based management and their activity reflects their varying starting points. In addition, the districts reflect a range of demographic situations: two large urban districts; one small suburban district; and one small regional district.

Finally, the work of the Leadership Sites started in an era in which school systems throughout Massachusetts have faced declining resources and political uncertainty. This environment has forced educators to focus on issues of survival as they also work to bring about change.

IV. METHODOLOGY

While the methodology used to collect data for this report differed according to the activity of each site, it consisted of interviews and observations in each district. Sites were visited for three days, with time divided between the district office and the lead school. The superintendent and at least one other district-level administrator were interviewed at all sites. In addition, interviews were held with the following individuals:

- Principals at each lead school
- At least two (and in most instances more) teachers on the lead schools' site-based teams.
- Parents on lead school teams, where applicable.

A minimum of one site-based team meeting was observed at each of the lead schools. In addition, other district-level meetings were observed at each site, including meetings that central office and school personnel held with SBIP service providers such as the organizational development consultants the Northeast Lab's Action-Research trainers, and a consultant from Innovation Associates.

The majority of interviews were not tape-recorded and all "quotes" should be viewed as paraphrases.

V. REPORT ORGANIZATION

The body of this report is organized into three sections. Part Two, "Highlights of Year 1 SBIP Activity at the Four Leadership Sites," summarizes each site's activity at both the district and school level. Part Three, "Drawing Broader Lessons," presents the participants' reflections about the nature of the change process at the sites. Part Four "Conclusions," contains the summary observations of this study in the context of the national experience with school change and school-based management.

PART TWO: HIGHLIGHTS OF YEAR 1 SBIP ACTIVITY AT THE FOUR LEADERSHIP SITES

I. THE SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE BEAL SCHOOL EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

The Shrewsbury Public School System is working to assist each school in developing its own approach to school-based management. School-based decision making at the Beal Center involves parents, teachers and administrators in planning and evaluating programmatic changes. Shrewsbury has used the opportunity of being an SBIP Leadership Site to further movement toward school-based management in all schools and to give the teachers and administrators at Beal tools for evaluating a change they made in their school's program.

A. The District

1. A Pluralistic Approach to School-Based Management

Superintendent John Collins believes that school-based management will only be effective if each school develops a model appropriate to its own staff, community, and culture. Consequently, the schools in the district are each using different approaches to work toward school-based management.

The high school has a three - committee structure: a Faculty Forum and a Student Advisory Committee make recommendations to the administration; a Parent Forum has input on policy and procedures.

The middle school is organized into interdisciplinary teams that make decisions on teaching and curriculum. In addition, voluntary groups of teachers are brought together to make decisions on issues such as hiring, report card changes, and revising the school's mission statement and goals.

The three elementary schools in the district also use varied approaches to school-based decision making. One school has a Steering Committee that serves as a clearing house and information center. In addition, voluntary groups of teachers and parents are involved in decision-making on a range of issues.

A second school has a Communications Forum, an informal group of teachers and parents that meets whenever an issue arises. The group discussed the process used to place students in classrooms, for example.

The third school has a Design Team. This team, comprised of some teachers and a majority of parents, is discussing the outcomes it would like to see for children in the year 2000 and the implications of this vision for the school. In addition, the principal is working with the faculty to develop short term goals for the school and plans to bring representatives of the Design Team and the faculty together at some point in the future.

The SBIP lead school, the Beal School, serves as the early childhood center for the district and houses all of the district's kindergarten students. The school-based management structure of this school is described in more detail below.

2. Central Office Leadership and Support

Shrewsbury Public Schools has used the SBIP to provide training to assist staff and parents in each of these schools in moving their school-based management efforts forward. "I saw the project as a way of getting really good people from the community connected with my staff and that has happened," said Superintendent John Collins.

The central office is also encouraging restructuring, asking staff in each school to plan for their future. Each school in the district was required to develop a plan, by the end of the 1991-92 school year, that included a vision/mission statement, outcome indicators, a description of desired school governance, a two-year school improvement plan addressing identified weaknesses within the school program, and a list of budget resources and staff development programs required.

3. Decentralizing the Budget

In addition, the Shrewsbury district office is beginning to move more decision-making to school sites. A proposal was made at the beginning of the 1992 calendar year to give partial lump sum budgeting to all schools. The proposal was to give each school or department a fixed sum of money for textbooks, teacher supplies, school supplies, conferences, memberships, and equipment. Each school could decide how best to distribute the funds within these categories. The original proposal was to start immediately with those schools that thought they were ready. However, the School Committee, in discussion with the superintendent, decided to wait and to start all schools together in September, 1992. Each school developed a

study committee to examine and prepare for this proposal in the interim. "We have to crawl before we walk," said Shrewsbury's business manager. "This approach is a start for Fiscal Year '93. We may eventually move to lump sum budgeting in other areas as well."

Proposals such as decentralized lump sum budgeting also have implications for staff in the district's central office. According to the business manager, "When lump sum budgeting goes into effect, there will be a change in my responsibilities. I will have to advise school staff, making them aware of all the variables involved. They will need to know the laws and legal implications. I'll still be available to consult with them during the budget making process and help them understand how the financial system works."

There has always been substantial decision-making authority in Shrewsbury's schools, according to Superintendent Collins. "We've always brought a team of teachers together to make curriculum decisions. The central office staff has never made these decisions on its own. Also, teachers and parents are always involved in hiring administrators or department directors." In addition, most buildings involve teachers in the selection of new teachers. This process will be more formalized in the future, according to Collins.

The Shrewsbury district plans to implement further training for teachers and looks forward to learning from the experience of the Beal School. Teachers and administrators in schools will receive training in consensual problem solving, conflict management, facilitation, leadership and management. The district is also planning to hold workshops for parents focusing on school-based management and needed skills, such as group problem solving.

Schools in the district also need to decide what is and is not transferable from the Beal School. One way of assessing the learning from Beal, according to Collins, is to have staff from all schools participate in SBIP-related meetings, such as those that have been facilitated by Innovation Associates. "But we have to be careful," said Collins, "because there are some differences between Beal and the other schools. Kindergarten is the best of all worlds: everyone's happy and parents tend to be more involved than in later grades. Also, Beal is a small school that started from scratch. Not all schools have this luxury."

B. The Beal School Early Childhood Center

1. School Culture

A culture of shared decision-making was established at the Beal School Early Childhood Center from its beginnings. The Center opened in what had been a closed school building in 1987. "We didn't have anything," said the principal. "The classrooms were barely habitable. We did everything as a team from day one, so the staff knows that this school is ours, not just mine." The staff has built on this collaborative culture over the year by formalizing its shared decision-making process and working together to evaluate changes that it has made in its program over the past year.

2. School-Based Management Task Force

The shared decision-making process at Beal became institutionalized in 1989 with the creation of the School-Based Management Task Force. The Task Force is a voluntary group of approximately six teachers, six parents, and the principal. Its membership is open and others are welcome to join the Task Force at any time.

School-based management is viewed favorably by parents, teachers and administrators at Beal. They believe that school-based management has positive effects on children at Beal. According to one parent, "The parents who are involved in the school reinforce the learning process at home." A teacher compared school-based management to Whole Language: "Both are grassroots ideas from teachers. Accordingly, teachers are invested, giving these efforts a much higher chance of success. It becomes your priority, which makes school better for kids." An administrator said that opening the school to parents and others in the community has caused the staff to look more carefully at itself: "We've opened the windows so wide for people to look in that we have also become more self-critical and analytical. This helps us to meet the needs of kids better."

3. Increasing Collegiality at the Beal

During the 1990-91 school year, the Task Force made giving teachers more planning time a priority and searched for ways to make this possible. They surveyed the parents of students at Beal and later the parents of incoming students to get their response to some of the Task Force proposals. From these surveys, the Task Force learned that parents did not like the idea of first grade mini-courses and they wanted changes in the half-day kindergarten schedule. After numerous meetings with the School Committee and a long process of addressing community concerns, the Beal

School staff was given permission to pilot a new schedule during the 1991-92 school year. The Task Force was charged with evaluating this scheduling change.

The new schedule was designed to give half-day kindergarten teachers a two-hour block of common planning time each Wednesday. To accomplish this goal, on alternating Wednesdays students would either have a four - hour extended session, or no school. During week 1, morning students would attend their Wednesday extended session from 9 AM to 1 PM, and afternoon students had no school, giving teachers planning time from 1-3 PM. During week 2, morning students had no school on Wednesday, and afternoon students attended their extended session from 11 AM to 3 PM, giving teachers planning time from 9-11 AM. Weeks 1 and 2 alternated throughout the year. The Task Force worked to evaluate this change, identifying the information they needed and collecting that information from parents and teachers. Parents were surveyed twice during the school year. Both surveys were sent home with students. The second survey was also supplemented with follow-up telephone interviews with parents who had not responded, in order to increase the response rate. Teachers also brought their observations, recommendations and concerns to the Task Force.

Both parents and teachers acknowledged that while giving teachers planning time was positive, adjustments did need to be made in the schedule. There are problems with the plan said one parent: "It's confusing with the every other Wednesday schedule. Last week, I forgot to send my child to school because I thought it was an off day." A teacher noted that the way the schedule has affected teaching and how it has affected school-based management are two different things: " We need the time for school-based management. Otherwise people would burn out. But it involves a whole new kind of planning and teaching." Teachers also commented that it was difficult to keep the two classes together with the new schedule. They also discovered that there was more quality learning time with the extended day that students had on Wednesday.

The Task Force adjusted the schedule to address these concerns for the upcoming academic year. In addition, teachers are working to develop discrete units and activities that can be accomplished during the longer Wednesday sessions. These units will provide children with enriching experiences that could not take place during the shorter sessions and that will allow teachers to keep the two classes approximately together in their work.

4. Parent Involvement: Some Lessons From Experience

Work on the Task Force has brought parents who previously opposed the schedule change to the table and has turned them into supporters of the plan and the school. One parent said that she joined the Task Force because she had violently opposed the proposed change the previous year. Now, however, she didn't see any detriment to the program. Another parent said that she had learned how to win over resistors by working on the Task Force. "The principal gives people the opportunity to address their concerns. She finds their strong points and uses them. It works. It builds self-esteem." According to the principal, "We increasingly involve parents. We use them as a resource. I notify the head of the PTA if any problems arise. She's the other part of me."

The Beal staff and the Task Force have also worked on developing indicators of a successful kindergarten program. The teachers developed a list of indicators in faculty meetings and parents on the Task Force were asked to do the same. This seemingly technical task led to some very positive results. Both lists contained similar indicators: students would be excited about literacy; they would be good listeners, good problem - solvers, and responsible group members. These indicators demonstrate that parents and teachers agreed on the outcomes they wanted for students. Such agreement has helped to form a strong platform on which to base future programmatic change.

II. THE SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE ELIAS BROOKINGS SCHOOL

The Springfield Public Schools are working toward educational transformation of the district and have started to decentralize the central office as part of that transformation. The Elias Brookings School is working toward this goal by establishing a school-based management team and converting from a grade 5-6 neighborhood school to a K-8 city-wide magnet school. Springfield has used the opportunity of being a SBIP Leadership Site to further its restructuring of education in the district and in the Brookings School.

A. The District

1. School-Based Management is Part of a Larger Change Effort

Superintendent Peter Negroni believes that there are four major transformations that must take place in education: organizational, pedagogical, social and attitudinal, and political. Implementation of these transformations began in Springfield three years ago in 1989. During the first year, school-based management teams were established at each school and were charged with developing a vision for the school and a plan for achieving that vision. During year two, schools planned their own staff development, revised curriculum for the upcoming restructuring of school grade levels, and made program and staff choices based on funding. During year three, the 1991-92 school year, schools opened with a new grade structure that moved from a system of K-4, K and 5-6, 7-9 and 10-12 schools to a system of K-5, K-8, 6-8 and 9-12 schools. In addition, this was the first year of Springfield's controlled choice plan, under which each school developed a distinctive theme and parents and students could select the school that children attended.

School-based management is an important part of this transformation, but "It's just one component of a much larger effort," according to Negroni. "You need to look at the **transformation** of the **system**." The move to school-based management is taking place in the broader context of the change in the district that occurred as a result of community initiatives. The earlier initiatives were as follows:

- **Parental Involvement:** resulted in the founding of the Springfield Parent Advisory Network (SPAN)

- **Conference for Children:** convened over three hundred public and private service providers, focusing on addressing the needs of children

- **Business Education Agreement:** outlined the role business would play in improving education

- **Religious Community Initiative:** outlined how the religious community would collaborate with schools to strengthen family and community support for childrens' learning in school

The 1991-92 school year initiatives included:

- Local indicators that provide the public with hard information about the conditions of education and outcomes at each school

- An Educational Summit, and ten mini-summits that led up to it, that engaged the community in self-analysis

- Economic Development: focused on issues like school-to-work transitions

This broader change has also been brought about through the work of task forces within the district. These task forces are representative of the community and include parents, teachers, administrators, business representatives and School Committee members. Groups are asked to participate and individuals are invited to volunteer themselves. "Everyone can be on a task force," said one district administrator. "The membership eventually shrinks to workable numbers." The following task forces were established:

- Central Office Reorganization

- Restructuring of Grades

- Curriculum for the 21st Century

- Effective Schools Research and Implementation

- High School Restructuring

- Tracking and Grade Retention

- Early Childhood
- Technology

"My role is creating conditions so that people demand change in the system," said Superintendent Negroni. "For example, we encourage and promote involvement of the outside community through these task forces, and then we **do what they say**."

The School District recently published a report called **Access to Equity and Academic Excellence** that integrates the recommendations of the task forces and prepares the district for moving to Stage III: full implementation. According to one district administrator, **Access to Equity** makes the point that many schools have restructured: "Now what matters is what happens in the classroom. Moving people was the means; instruction is the end."

The report calls for "making profound and simultaneous changes in three interrelated areas: (1) curriculum and instruction, (2) guidance and academic support, and (3) school organization." "Everything needs to be examined," said the administrator. "This is not a shopping list; schools have to plan to do it all."

Every school in the district was asked to present a plan by the end of June, 1992, outlining how it expected to accomplish all of these goals within five years. The plans were then to be reviewed by the superintendent and central administrators over the summer. Schools are to be given feedback on their plans and the "go-ahead" for taking action.

2. Changes in the Role of Central Administration

The central office in the Springfield School District is also changing. "There used to be many chiefs with big sticks," according to a building level administrator. "They had a lot of power and made decisions for the schools. This is no longer the case." The central office has become smaller. Ten central administrators were moved to schools and, as people have left, they have not been replaced. "The central office of administration is changing to 'central office as a resource' with the schools in charge," said one central administrator. "Once the schools recognize this, they use the office more because they need the support. I'm not sure where we will end," the administrator added. "We're still evolving." Central office staff also reported that they were working together more as a team. "Everyone used to do their own thing, Chapter 1 or whatever,"

said one central administrator. "You only knew what others were doing if you happened to go to lunch with them. Now there's more effort to get people to work as a team."

"The restructuring is still incomplete," according to Negroni. "It was done in a time of fiscal crisis with the intent of maintaining the jobs of current employees. Throwing people out would have left a negative atmosphere. I didn't want anyone out on the street after 35 years with the district." Negroni said that the district still needs to redefine job descriptions and cut down on layers of management, as was recommended by the Task Force on Central Office Reorganization.

As the Springfield School District entered year three of its transformation, it provided staff with training on assessment and on responding to cultural diversity. The latter is part of the district's work to ensure equal access and outcomes for all students.

B. Elias Brookings School

The Elias Brookings School changed from a neighborhood, grade 5-6 school to a citywide, magnet, K-8 school of choice in the year of this study. This transition involved changing the philosophy, curriculum, and scheduling of the school in preparation for working with a more diverse age group. The staff of the school volunteered for this change. According to the principal, "We used to lose 400-500 out of 650 kids per year. Our test scores were near the bottom. So I began to keep detailed graphs of the level at which kids came in and found they were two years below grade level. I was the only principal to say 'I want a K-8 building' so that I can control kids' preparation. Being a magnet school means that even if kids move across town, they can still continue at Brookings."

A Site-Based Team chosen by the principal met for two-and-a-half years before Brookings became a K-8 school to prepare for the change. This year the school moved to an elected Site-Based Team composed of four teachers, two parents, a representative from the school's business partner, Coopers and Lybrand, the director of the school's Community Initiative Team, the principal, and the vice-principal. Other staff are free to attend team meetings and are encouraged to talk to their representatives before or after meetings, but may not participate in discussions or decision making.

Springfield teachers worked without a contract throughout the year of this study. They were consequently not obligated to participate on site-based management teams that required work above and beyond the normal workday and were not paid for their time. The teachers on the Brookings

Site-Based Team, however, chose to continue their work, recording the hours spent in hopes of future reimbursement.

Over the past year the team has discussed school problems such as the behavior of older children around younger children. The team has also discussed how to spend monies that have been raised for graduation and field trips and made a presentation to the school committee on physical improvements needed in the building. According to one teacher: "The role of the team is to work with the principal on decisions of scheduling. Everyone has input, but the team is the core working group. The principal makes all decisions after input from the team. The team also plays a peace-keeping role; it tries to make things work smoothly and to explain decisions that are made."

The team also facilitates communication between teachers and the administration. For example, when teachers were concerned over the specialists' grading of students, they went to their site-based team representatives who raised the issue with the principal. The principal met with the specialists and worked out a satisfactory resolution.

Site-based management has brought about changes at Brookings, as is evidenced by the following comments:

Principal: "I used to have to wait for a signal from the central office to make a decision. Now, people in schools are making their own decisions."

Parent: "I like being on the Site-Based Team. The PTO and the Site-Based Team go hand-in-hand. I have a better understanding of teachers' problems."

Teacher 1: "The team is a place for teachers to talk. It has led to more involvement of the teachers with the larger community."

Teacher 2: "More teachers are willing to be more frank with the principal now. They're not afraid to come in and talk about issues."

Principal: "Teachers are now very free to tell me if a decision is not correct and to bring up problems. This doesn't bother me. Sometimes they're right, and I am glad to consider what they say. When you empower teachers with collaborative decision-making, there's a tremendous amount of brainpower and clout released. The faculty is more apt to do what the team decides."

Site-based management also improves education for students. Said one teacher, "Central Office can't supervise everything. Now the people who work with the kids are making the decisions. The goal is helping kids." According to a second teacher, "The quality and standard of preparation have increased, which makes a better day for students. Also the principal sits in on Student Council meetings and visits the editors and staff of the student newspaper, which gives students their chance to have input."

The Brookings School, which is situated in one of the "toughest" neighborhoods in the district, has become increasingly involved with the community. Its Community Initiative Team has representatives from 15 groups including health centers, mental health agencies, the school system's central administration, the District Attorney's office, and the school's business partner. The team explores ways to reach out to the community, working to make Brookings a community school and hoping to improve the neighborhood. It has sponsored community gatherings and started after-school programs such as basketball and a drum and bugle corps.

"Through a collaborative decision-making process we have been able to change the whole building, broadening our offerings to children and the community," said the principal. She noted that during the summer, "We will need to look at what's happened this year and assess it. I'm hoping to bring together a team to ask, 'What have we done? How appropriate is it for our constituency? How can we better meet the needs?'"

III. THE TRITON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND TRITON REGIONAL JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The Triton Regional School District is working to expand shared decision-making in all schools in the district and to coordinate what has been a highly decentralized regional school district. The Triton Regional Junior/SeniorHigh School established a shared decision-making structure at the beginning of the 1990-91 school year. Becoming a SBIP Leadership Site gave both the district and the school the recognition, impetus, and resources needed to continue these efforts.

A. The District

1. A Focus on Curriculum Alignment

Becoming a school-based management district is typically thought of as a process of decentralization. At the already highly decentralized Triton Regional School District, it is actually a process of working toward increased coordination and alignment within the district, while at the same time giving more decision-making authority to individual schools. Three different communities, each with its own elementary school, send students to the Triton Junior/Senior High School. Previously, each sending school acted as its own district, with little attention paid to coordinating curriculum and other policies among the schools.

Superintendent Gerald Kohn used the resources of SBIP to promote district-wide systemic change. He asked the SBIP organizational development consultants to work with the district Administrative Team, which is composed of the three district-level administrators and the principals of each school. These consultants worked with the Team using an action-research process. The Team chose district-wide curriculum as the focus for its work. The consultants helped the Team identify the existing and desired end-states for the curriculum and the expectations of different stakeholders in the process. Using this information, the Team developed a plan for reaching its curriculum goals. Said Kohn, "The consultants helped us go through a process and develop a plan. They also helped us work with the community and the school boards, so that we could build greater public understanding of the initiative for a system-wide curriculum." "We never would have gotten to this point without the intervention of the organizational development consultants," said another district administrator.

2. Initiatives for Collegiality and Professional Development

The work of the Administrative Team and the consultants meshed with ongoing work in the lead school and in the district. The faculty at Triton Junior/Senior High School had identified curriculum as a critical focus in their needs assessment the previous year. The district's Staff Development Planning Committee echoed the faculty's concern by adopting curriculum and "teachers-teaching-teachers" as the focus for the district's professional development for this past year. Each school had to offer at least one workshop open to other teachers in the district. The Committee further recommended that a three-to-five year professional development plan be developed with an emphasis on examining the pre-school - grade 12 curriculum. Two meetings of grade 5-8 teachers took place in March of 1992. Teachers discussed overlaps and holes in the curriculum in the transition from the three elementary schools to the junior high. They also designed a common rating sheet for recommending students to sections in response to parental concern over placements. Fifth and eighth grade teachers will continue to meet to discuss reading material selection.

During the second March meeting, all teachers in the district met by grade level. This was the first such meeting in Triton and was very well received. "At least we're talking about doing things as a whole now," said one district administrator. "Teachers are more wedded to doing things as a whole, although this varies some by school. It's really an issue of getting together, as opposed to becoming more decentralized, and it's been very valuable to have an outside facilitator to help us with this process."

This increased emphasis on professional development and curriculum has led to changes in classrooms. According to Kohn: "We are seeing changes in the way teachers are behaving with kids. That is happening at the junior high school and in the intermediate grade levels at the elementary schools. There's a much greater awareness and acceptance of group process and cooperative learning. Teachers are using different kinds of teaching styles to address different learning styles and are getting together to talk about these issues. There's also a sense of higher expectations for kids coming out of this process in both the math and the reading areas, which is extremely beneficial."

The Triton Regional School District is working to align curriculum from school to school and grade level to grade level, as well as to increase the communication among schools. The district Administrative Team continued meeting over the summer of 1992 with the organizational development consultants. The ultimate goal is to present a plan to the school committee for a district-wide, unified, K-12 curriculum renewal process.

B. Triton Junior/Senior High School

1. Interactive Accountability and a New Governance Structure

A new governance structure was established in Triton Junior/Senior High School beginning in the 1990-91 school year. The school had previously had a strong departmental structure, with department heads making all program decisions. All department head positions were eliminated in the spring of 1990. This change was made at the suggestion of the principal who felt that the departmental structure was resistant to change and impeded communication with the faculty. The new governance structure has resulted in increased communication among and between the faculty and the administration, as well as in improved professional development for staff.

Triton's new governance system works on the principle of "interactive accountability." There are multiple committees with overlapping responsibilities and memberships. An elected Leadership Council (LC) heads the structure. The LC is composed of ten elected faculty: four junior and six senior high teachers; the instructional support coordinator; the director of guidance; two assistant principals; and the principal who serves as chair. (Teachers are paid or given staff development credit for serving on committees.) Other committees include the Staff Development Committee, the Instructional Supervision/Evaluation Committee, the Administrative Council, the Committee of Program Coordinators, and ad-hoc committees that are formed to address various issues.

Interactive accountability means that the groups hold each other accountable through shared membership and shared responsibilities. For example, the instructional support coordinator serves on the Program Coordinators' Committee as well as on the Leadership Council. The program coordinators are responsible for department curriculum, but the Leadership Council is responsible for the school as a whole and consequently has input into departmental programs. "The groups are holding each other accountable," according to the principal. "They see themselves as paid to do a job and they are committed to doing it well."

The Leadership Council (LC) serves as the primary advisory group to the principal in the running of the school and as a liaison to the Staff Development and Instructional Supervision/Evaluation Committees. Members of the LC also chair the ad-hoc committees, serve on LC sub-committees, and serve as conduits for faculty to recommend agenda

items for Council consideration. Said one teacher, "It made me nervous at first that the Leadership Council was a **recommending** body. But the principal has accepted all of our recommendations over the past two years."

The LC has spent considerable time on the school budget. It recommended budget cuts for the 1991-92 school year, including cuts in staff. "This was very hard for them to do," according to the principal. "The Teachers Association supported them in this, even though it didn't really want to. It recognized it had to go along if it wanted a part in decision-making."

Teachers, while wanting to be involved in the decision-making, were distressed at having to spend the bulk of the Leadership Council time on the budget. "I'm sorry that we've had to spend so much time on budget cuts," said one teacher. "I would like to focus more on school improvement." "We would rather spend our time on curriculum and other educational issues," said another. The LC has also discussed course catalogues, course content, scheduling, staff development, the implications of school choice, and the impact of parent inquiry into the junior high curriculum.

The LC also advises the administration on issues arising within the school. The principal requested that the editors of the senior class newspaper show him each edition before it was issued because he would be held ultimately responsible for its content. Immediately before one LC meeting, he got a copy of one issue that included a student survey asking whether or not condoms should be distributed at Triton. The principal told the students to discuss the survey with him before they did anything with the results and then went to the LC meeting and sought advice. Council members suggested that students needed to know the politics and other ramifications of their actions. Students agreed to meet with the principal and the instructional support coordinator the next day, and subsequently to include the survey in a future newspaper issue that set condoms in the context of social problems. Through the LC, the faculty had input into the handling of this issue and students were a part of the decision making process. The principal noted, "The Leadership Council gave me valuable advice and context. Before, I only would have discussed this matter with an assistant principal."

Teachers report that there is more communication among the teachers, program coordinators, and administration as a result of the reorganization:

Teacher 1: "This is **new** wine in **new** bottles. With the new structure and the membership on various committees, 28 different faculty members are in positions of responsibility. Because a number of these positions are elected, people are responsible to their

constituents and decisions can't be made in the same way as before. The biggest success is the number of people who are aware of how the district functions as an institution and are invested in it. This greater quantity and quality of conversation on a variety of levels is important to preserve."

Teacher 2: "There is stronger communication now. Each member of the Leadership Council has ten people with whom to communicate. Before, the junior high was totally alienated from the department heads."

Some teachers do not like the reorganization. "It split the school dramatically," according to an administrator, "with 60-65% of teachers for and 35-40% against the reorganization. They're still probably split 70-30." One teacher said, "Program coordinators don't have time for anything. They teach a full course load. Our department chair had time to talk about testing, budget, issues with students, and to evaluate teachers." This teacher acknowledged, however, that even though her department doesn't like the reorganization, there are school-wide positives, "People who were never involved are now involved. This system could work if we gave program coordinators one additional planning period, but that eliminates some of the savings that resulted from the elimination of department heads."

2. Bottom-up Decision Making About Staff Development

The reorganization has also resulted in improved professional development. The position of instructional support coordinator was established by splitting one position between two people. The coordinators provide instructional support at the request of classroom teachers. According to one coordinator, "The support can include supervision, curriculum support, or working on questioning skills. It's not evaluative and the agenda for observation is set by the teacher. It is completely confidential, for the teacher's own use."

In addition, the coordinators and the Staff Development Committee have created an up-to-date staff library and have revamped staff development. "Staff development used to mean having a meeting and then grading papers. Now we have speakers and teachers-teaching-teachers," said one teacher. "Staff development is bottom-up here," said another. "Last year we had school-wide agenda setting. We did a needs assessment and developed an action plan for staff development."

Teachers can apply for staff development credit for participating in activities such as peer supervision. Teachers are awarded one credit toward the salary schedule for every twelve staff development hours. This system, which is also used in the district's three elementary schools, has increased teacher participation in professional development activities.

In the near future, the Triton staff will work on developing a vision to guide their school improvement efforts. They are considering using the New England Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation process as a vehicle for developing a vision for the school.

IV. THE FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE MORTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

SBIP-inspired initiatives in the Fall River Public School system and the Morton Middle School have made the boundaries between the district and the community, the school and the district, and the teachers and the administration more permeable. With increased collaboration and expanded understanding, educators, parents, and community representatives have become aware of the need for change. Fall River has used the opportunity of being a SBIP Leadership Site to expand its work with the community to restructure the Fall River Schools. The Morton Middle School is serving as a pilot for future school-based management efforts in the district.

A. The District

1. Building on a Growing Momentum for Change

The Fall River School District has a history of meshing a range of initiatives into a network that collectively moves the district in its desired direction. The district has been involved since 1990 in the Renewal of the Teaching Professional Project sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Education. This project expanded professional development and growth opportunities by establishing three-way partnerships among K-12 schools, higher-education, and businesses. Fall River's Teacher Renewal Committee identified school restructuring as the focus for its renewal and recruited the Morton Middle School to be the district's model school for the project. Working collaboratively, the district and the Morton Middle School began planning for school-based management.

In 1991, the Fall River Regional Task Force -- a citizens' group formed to examine objectively the problems faced by the Fall River community -- and the Chamber of Commerce joined forces to establish the Coalition for Excellence in Education (CEE). This committee was dedicated to restructuring the Fall River schools. The CEE launched The Fall River 21st Century Program by holding a leadership conference and establishing eight subcommittees that would develop plans for improving the schools. The CEE also convinced the Fall River School Committee to declare Fall River an "America 2000" city, **Fall River 2000.**

During the same period, Superintendent John Correiro began participating in the School-Based Improvement Project (SBIP) and applied to become an SBIP Leadership Site. "Our involvement in the Teacher Renewal project led to the work at Morton School and to my joining SBIP. The Coalition was concerned with school improvement but had no model in mind. As they began looking at eight areas for improvement, I thought they were leading

in the same direction as the SBIP and that it made sense to become a Leadership Site." The SBIP Leadership Site program has given both the district and the Morton Middle School added resources to further their restructuring agenda.

2. A School-Community Coalition for Change

The Coalition for Excellence in Education has created a mechanism for the district and the community to work together. "The School Committee and the district administrators are integrated into the Coalition," said one business member. "CEE was designed so that the school committee and the administration would not be parties after the fact, but develop agreement through participation. The administration's involvement is very much hands-on." The work of the Coalition resulted in the Fall River Task Force submitting a proposal, **FOCUS 21**, to the New American Schools Development Corporation. This proposal incorporated a number of the ideas generated by the Coalition sub-committees.

"Relationships are changing in the district" as a result of the Coalition, according to one district administrator. "At a curriculum meeting yesterday, business people said 'We'll leave the curriculum discussion to the educators.' The educators said, 'No, everyone should be involved in this.'" Another district administrator added: "Business people realize that education is underfunded and the budget has ignored school facilities for too long. Now they're saying it. This is a very different tune. The new Henry Lord Middle School would not have been built without the broad-based input of the community."

The district is also beginning to function in a new way. Said one district administrator: "I'm now working on more projects that incorporate the principles of restructuring. Three years ago, I was working with programs like the Essential Skills Grants with a very centralized model of decision-making. Now we're experimenting with and exploring restructuring."

3. Constraints on Change

This same administrator noted, however, "None of the basic structures of the school system have yet been changed in terms of hiring, purchasing, management, and evaluation. All of those things remain essentially the same. We're not making changes in our procedures. I think we're at the awareness level. We realize that if we have more peer coaching in the district, teacher evaluation could change, for example."

The Morton Middle School has served as the SBIP lead school for the district and as a laboratory for the Coalition, generating discussions and learning for both initiatives. The district is now ready to consider whether these learnings will transfer to other schools in the district, several of which are exploring restructuring approaches. For example, the newly-opened Henry Lord Middle School was designed for team planning and a house system. Its faculty has worked with and learned from the staff at the Morton School. Fall River's Durfee High School has had an elected planning team of administrators, teachers, parents, custodians and assistants for a number of years. This team is "on the spectrum of school-based management," as one district administrator put it.

The current climate, however, is not conducive to the spread of school-based management to other schools, according to district administrators. "Unless the financial piece changes, this work is doomed to failure. The leadership required by both district and school administrators can't be provided if our whole organizational life is spent in cutting, pasting, begging and pleading. We don't have the time to be doing what we're doing today. Morton could be the model for other schools, but it's not going to be if the environment doesn't change. Teachers in Fall River do not have a contract. While teachers at Morton have contributed their time to serving on committees and restructuring teams, others may not be such willing volunteers."

B. The Morton Middle School

1. Collegiality as a Restructuring Theme

The Morton Middle School is changing from a bureaucratic structure, in which teachers were isolated in their classrooms, to a more collegial structure in which teachers and administrators are working together to improve education at the school. To further this transition, restructuring activity during the 1991-92 school year focused on refining Morton's shared governance structure, building collegiality among staff, and educating the faculty for future changes.

2. Renewal/Restructuring Committee

Morton Middle School has a volunteer Renewal/Restructuring Committee with approximately 16 members, a majority of whom are teachers. Other members include the principal, two assistant principals, the guidance counselor, and a university professor who assists the Committee. A teacher

serves as the Committee's elected chair. Committee meetings are open to everyone at the school and all those in attendance are allowed to vote.

The Committee has given teachers a voice in the management of the school and has brought hope for change. Said one teacher, "Teachers think no matter what they say, nothing will change. Now they are beginning to see change with the Committee. Eighty-five to ninety percent of the faculty know that the Committee is trying to make things better." Another teacher said, "I've had lots of ideas during my teaching career, but few opportunities to express them. This Committee gives me a way to do it."

The primary goal of the Committee during the project year was to educate and prepare the faculty for future changes that will take place in the school. Teachers, through the Committee, planned for the use of their release time for the 1991-92 academic year. According to one teacher, "The Committee has been heavily involved in identifying topics for release time. Now we can say what we want to do and have our own staff development programs." Another Committee member pointed out that schools have always had the option to plan their own professional development activities, but Morton was the first school in the district to actually do so.

Faculty were asked in the fall of 1990 to prioritize issues for discussion under the categories of classroom management, curriculum, and governance. The top two priorities in each category were discussed during release time. In this way, the Committee "made a serious attempt to involve everyone in defining the direction for the school," said one teacher. This year the Committee has continued to plan professional development activities after getting faculty input. The 1991-92 school year's in-service activities focused on cooperative learning, teaming, integrative education, and heterogeneous grouping, with staff presenting to each other in some cases. Macro-scheduling and a whole-school house system have also been discussed, but additional staff will be needed to implement the whole-school house plan.

3. Olympics and Community Outreach

In 1991-92, the Morton School established the Olympics as a school-wide theme. This theme was chosen to give teachers the opportunity to experiment with integrated units and team teaching. According to one teacher, "This was a chance to educate staff by letting them try things out voluntarily." Some teachers participated more actively than others. "Some people have jumped in with both feet. Others are hanging back. They may be afraid of even little changes." "It's hard to wean people off old ideas," said another teacher.

The year-long Olympic theme culminated in May, 1992 with a school-wide opening ceremony involving all students, teachers, and administrators as well as parents, district administrators, the mayor, and other town officials. The day was clear and the ceremonies were held outside on the playing field. Home-rooms marched into the field, each representing different nations. Students were dressed in the uniforms of their countries (T-shirts made by students and their art teachers) and carried their respective flags. The school principal introduced the mayor of Fall River who officially opened the games. The Olympic torch was carried from the school by three runners (all teachers) and the flame was lit. The superintendent of schools released doves of peace (homing pigeons) and Holly Metcalf, a 1984 Olympic gold medalist, delivered an inspirational speech to the crowd. Students then danced traditional dances from some of the different countries represented.

After the conclusion of the ceremony, a reception was held for the 25-30 parents who had helped with the effort. Parents, teachers and administrators were unanimous in thinking the event was wonderful. Said the superintendent of schools: "For me, the Olympics are probably as representative an activity as we could possibly design. They bring every facet of what we talk about together -- school, community, parents, administrators. The question is, 'How do we bring out the best in people?' I think this project brought out the best in a lot of people." Another district administrator added, "I think we were successful because of the planning group at the school. The more people feel they have a say in what's going on, the more willing they are to do extra work to make it happen. They see it as their work and they have a real sense of ownership. I think this spirit came through."

4. Initiatives for Students

In addition, two new programs were started this year that will bring about changes for students. A student government organization was instituted and an advisor/advisee program was started for the seventh grade. At one Renewal/Restructuring Committee meeting, some teachers expressed apprehension about the advisor/advisee program. While they had hosted a speaker from a school with a similar program, they did not feel adequately prepared. Others on the Committee wanted to get started and stressed that the planning had included the development of a small pilot advisor/advisee program. The Committee agreed to go ahead and the results have been positive. "It's going great," said an administrator later in the school year. "The kids and teachers like it, and we've had no complaints. The teachers are doing a great job! We've had 19 teachers volunteer to work with the seventh grade, and we hope to expand the program within the school and the district."

5. Involving More Faculty in School Decision-Making

Morton's Renewal/Restructuring Committee discussed "next steps" with the faculty at the end of the school year and agreed on several changes in the school's governance structure. Starting next year, policy decisions made by the Renewal/Restructuring Committee will need to be approved by the faculty. This change is intended to prevent divisions between the Committee and the larger faculty. In addition, the Committee presented a three-to-five year vision for the school. This vision statement is to be discussed by the faculty during the 1992-93 school year.

One Committee member summarized the progress that has been made at Morton this year: "There have been major changes in governance. There has been a change in the way issues are discussed. When an issue arises, there is a forum to discuss it. While the committee is voluntary, it has led to our formalizing our process. There have been some positive changes in instruction. Teachers are experimenting with integrated units. As an example, each homeroom represented a country in the Olympics in May and some teachers have developed integrated units around this theme. It's a team effort."

PART THREE: DRAWING BROADER LESSONS

The challenges faced by the SBIP Leadership Sites in their first year emerged from two principal causes: (1) the fiscal and political uncertainties faced by all Massachusetts schools and districts and (2) the nature of the change process. While it is hoped that the fiscal and political uncertainties of the Massachusetts environment will not continue throughout the life of the project, it is unrealistic not to acknowledge them. On the other hand, other challenges due to the nature of the change process will continue to exist.

What can we learn from the four Leadership Sites about how fiscal and political uncertainty affects the change process?

(1) A baseline of resources is needed for change.

Change is impeded when people have to run harder just to do what they have always done, as has been the case in virtually all Massachusetts schools and districts due to staff and budget cuts. The slowing of change has been exacerbated by political uncertainties about the level of state support that make the amount of funding that will be available to schools.

One principal said that he had been unable to give teachers their schedules until August in recent years because he wasn't sure how many staff the district would be able to afford until then.

A superintendent listed some of his key challenges as finding the resources to pay appropriate salaries, repair a decaying infrastructure, and build new schools for a growing population. Another central office administrator said, "These are **ridiculous** budgets. They are band-aids. We need state funding. People feel overworked and overwhelmed, and it's understandable."

What broader lessons about the complex nature of change did the Leadership Sites project bring to light?

(2) Providing resources and support for change is necessary but not sufficient.

(3) Schools need help learning how to open up to the public and to other constituencies, as well as to organizational resources.

School-based management requires that the boundaries of the school become more permeable. In these schools, parents and other community

members are typically actively involved in school decision-making and school staff are accustomed to working with outside specialists.

Schools with permeable boundaries are different from more traditional schools where the job of educating students is left to teachers and administrators. In these schools, teachers and others engage in joint agenda setting, negotiation, conflict resolution and facilitation. School people need help in figuring out how to work with outside constituencies and what should be the role of these constituencies. Two of the four lead schools expressed ambivalence and confusion over the role of parents in schools. But the fact that the role of parents is an item of discussion is itself a sign of growth to a more client-focused school culture.

In addition, schools are not accustomed to having outsiders arrive and ask how they can help. These helpers are more likely to be able to provide immediate assistance when there is a recognized need in the school. Without this obvious and appropriate need, it takes time for potential resource people to develop sufficient knowledge of the school, to suggest ways that might be useful, and to reach joint agreements with the people at the site. It also cannot be assumed that people at the site will immediately be able to articulate how an outsider can be useful.

As the project's "critical friend" role showed, however, having an outsider asking questions does eventually lead the school to an increased awareness of what help it needs and where it can get it.

What can we learn from the four Leadership Sites about the pace of the change process?

(4) Change takes time and time is a rare and precious commodity.

As has often been stated, change takes time. Even though each of the Leadership Sites had already been working with school-based managementfor a period of time, more time was needed. Restructuring requires changing structures, habits, attitudes and ways of thinking about work. It requires working with people in different ways and ultimately re-examining and questioning the ways things are being done.

The need for time was evident in the Leadership Sites in two ways. First, school-based teachers and administrators found it hard to find the time needed for meetings and discussion. "The hardest thing is finding the time for people to meet and sustaining the group's energy," said one principal.

Second, district and school staff did not always have time to honor the shared decision-making process. "We were just given the opportunity to apply for a restructuring grant for our lead school," said one district administrator. "The site-based team should work on the grant proposal. Because the proposal is due in two weeks, the team doesn't have the time. I called the school, therefore, and we agreed that school staff would like to have been able to do it. However, due to the timeline, my office should just go ahead." One principal concurred: "I have flyers that come across my desk all the time saying 'Consult your site-based team about this.' By the time the team could meet, however, the deadline would be past, so I just decide. What's the point of bothering them with it?"

Another principal said, "After a few years, we learned to institutionalize team management and shared decision making. We have changed our timelines for decisions and actions so that there is time for team input. We and the central office had to work at this. I told them, if you want me to involve my team on a decision, you're got to give me some lead time."

(5) *How you proceed depends on where you start.*

The work of each school over the past year depended on its starting point. Some schools were still building a culture to support shared decision-making. They spent the year experimenting with working together, collaborating in different ways, and formalizing and adjusting their new decision-making structures. They are not yet clear on their vision for change and existing visions are not completely shared. They are still not sure how to work with groups outside the school such as parents and other community members. Their work for the future is to address these questions.

Other schools had in place a culture supportive of shared decision-making. They spent the year trying to examine and evaluate changes that had been made in their programs while working with outside constituencies to build understanding and support for the work of the school.

(6) *There is no one, obviously correct approach to district-wide change; each approach presents its own difficulties and opportunities.*

Beginning district-wide change with a pilot or lead school, while providing that school with the energy and resources for change, does not ensure that other schools will learn from the lead school's experiences. There must be systematic efforts at diffusion built in from the start. With a few exceptions, no one in the Leadership Sites could point to ways that other schools in the district were learning from their lead schools. Thought needs to be

given to developing mechanisms that could help this learning take place. Thought also needs to be given to what can and cannot be learned from a lead school. While it seems clear that it should be possible to learn from another school's experiences, it is also clear that each school faces different conditions that are presented by its unique staff and student population. One superintendent expressed concern that too much comparison of the lead school to other schools might lead to jealousy and frustration within the district.

Another potential difficulty of starting with a lead school is that staff in the school feel that they are being asked to perform above and beyond their peers in other schools. "It's hard to motivate the staff to get involved with school-based management when other schools in the district aren't doing it," commented one member of a site-based team.

But there have been some "transfers" of knowledge and experience from the lead school to other schools in the system. The faculty from the lead school in Fall River, for example, served as a resource to the system's newly opened school facility. The self-assessment being developed by the Beal School can be used by other building-based teams in Shrewsbury.

Implementing school-based management district-wide has its difficulties, as well as opportunities. Questions will arise about addressing the unevenness in implementation across schools. In the district that was using a district-wide approach, some teams were meeting more actively than others; other teams were not functioning as a shared decision-making body.

A systemwide approach does, however, create an irreversible momentum for change; there is no going back to the old system because it does not exist anymore.

(7) School-based management structures are necessary but not sufficient.

Establishing school-based management structures is an important first step. It does not by itself ensure, however, that true shared decision-making takes place or that changes are made that improve student learning. While all the lead schools had site-based teams, teachers in some of the schools still felt that some members of the staff were listened to more than others. Being a member of a site-based team did not necessarily mean that a teacher felt that s/he had an equal share of power. Some educators also were concerned that an insider - outsider dynamic was developing between the team and the larger faculty in their schools. "Some site teams have become

ruling *juntas* in their schools," said one superintendent. "The entire staff needs to see school-based management as a vehicle for helping to strengthen the school," he noted.

A school-based management structure will not automatically be used to examine assumptions about teaching and learning or to talk about how to improve practice in the classroom. Staff at some schools could point to ways that school-based management had affected students; in other schools they could not. It may be that schools turn to issues of teaching and learning only after first establishing a shared decision-making structure and culture.

(8) *Ambivalence and disagreement over what school-based management means and how far it should go can be resolved by leadership from the superintendent.*

There is disagreement over whether school-based management means that teachers serve in advisory positions or that a school-based team has the authority to make decisions. Teachers, when asked what advice they would give to colleagues beginning school-based management, said that they should be clear on what decisions they could and could not make. "I'm confused about it," said one teacher, "because site-based management was originally thought to be about budget and personnel. However, if the central administrators still makes these decisions, I'd tell teachers not to think too grandiosely. Start small."

Some principals in lead schools also expressed ambivalence about what they wanted school-based management to entail: "I'm not sure how far site-based management should go," said one principal. "I don't want the power to hire and fire unless I have a mini-personnel office in the building. Given choices, I would rather have money to meet the needs of students, through items such as texts. Another principal said, "I'm just not sure we're ready for control over the budgeting for this building."

(9) *When school-based management produces a change in the locus of decision making, that change has a positive impact for students.*

Some of the schools' reluctance to assume control over budgeting for the building was due to the fact that fiscal stringency meant control over what resources had to be cut. At Triton, for example, teachers on the Leadership Council regretted having to spend so much time on "budget cuts rather than school improvement." But another example from Shrewsbury shows the positive potential of school-based management under more "normal" fiscal conditions. When Shrewsbury received an incremental increase in state aid,

interested schools were invited to decide at the building level how their "lump sum" allotment was to be spent. "The spending decisions they came up with," said superintendent John Collins, "were far more creative and cost-effective than those that we at the central office could ever have envisioned."

(10) Moving to school-based management puts considerable stress on building principals unless their job is systematically redefined.

School-based management places many new demands on building principals. If none of their previous responsibilities are reduced, these demands create stress.

Principals' jobs have grown. "I increasingly involve parents and use them as a resource," said one principal. "It takes a lot of time, but it's important. My job has become harder. We keep taking on new initia-tives which bring increased publicity and attention. And I haven't given up anything." A second principal said, "The change is that now, whenever something comes up, they say let's let X school do it. I guess the central office is looking to us for leadership, but frankly, I feel like I can't get anything done. I'm always in meetings." A third principal said, "My role hasn't changed, but my responsibilities have grown. The team points out needs and I have to respond. I've never been so busy."

One principal expressed frustration with the central office. "We have school-based management, but the superintendent tells us what we have to do regardless of our priorities. Sometimes the district requests feel like a poor fit. We need to spend our time on other things."

One principal, however, pointed out the benefits of this extra work: "I really believe in shared decision making. You get the most out of people -- more involvement, more good ideas. It was my style even before school-based management was introduced."

(11) Schools and districts can move only as fast as their larger communities, which implies a new role for superintendents.

The Leadership Sites open themselves to public participation which requires that the superintendent assume the role of educator of the community. Superintendents become responsible for educating the school committee, other district administrators, school teachers and administrators, parents, members of the business community, and the community at large.

Two of the districts have established particularly strong relationships with outside community groups, turning them into supporters of the schools. Said one superintendent, "The Chamber of Commerce used to be an arch enemy. It called the district a bloated bureaucracy and accused us of handling our finances in secret. Now, it's a strong supporter." A central office administrator in another district said, "Business, parents and the school committee give the superintendent strong support. I credit the superintendent for his ability to put forth the vision, his depth of information, and his articulateness. Substantive community involvement was the key -- involving all constituencies throughout the process."

School committees and teachers' unions also need to be included. One school that made a change in its program had to meet with the school committee numerous times before being allowed to pilot the project. One school committee in the four Leadership Sites had not accepted shared decision-making as a core value. Other school committees, while supportive, wavered in the strength of their support. One committee approved the use of a new participatory hiring process for one position in the district, but then reverted back to the old process for a subsequent hiring. One district originally proposed giving substantial new decision-making authority to schools this year, but the committee decided to wait until the next year. When a committee member made this recommendation, the superintendent agreed. "I deferred to her because I could read very quickly where the committee was," said the superintendent. "Three or four months doesn't mean anything in the long run. Part of being superintendent is knowing how hard to push people to change." School-based management also effects the traditional conceptions of teachers' unions. "The teachers' union is resistant," said a teacher in one of the lead schools. "They think that school-based management means that teachers are doing the administrators' job. This is a total misconception. We've loved what we have done and have been able to change."

"I've been unable to get the unions to move quickly," said one superintendent. "They don't want the power to fire, only to hire. I'm willing to give up more, but they're afraid. They won't allow individual school overrides of the contract."

Involvement of the larger community has increased dramatically in some of the Leadership Sites, presenting new management challenges for superintendents. "We need to point out that while historically there has not been a great deal of community input and involvement in the schools, there's so much of it now that we need to be conscious of how to manage and deal with that input," said one superintendent.

The larger community also needs to be brought along. One superinten-dent named "getting everyone to buy into the vision" as one of his key challenges and viewed his role as one of "creating the conditions under which people demand change in the system." Another said, "Sometimes I wonder if my own optimism outdistanced where the community is. I have to remember the progress that's been made so I don't get too frustrated."

(12) Transforming educational systems requires that superintendents play new roles and use new skills.

The roles that the four Leadership Site superintendents play share some common denominators. They all focus on bringing about change, as opposed to managing the status quo. This focus on change puts an emphasis on strategic planning and on building and managing constituencies as a part of this planning. Superintendents need new skills to manage this change process. "I would suggest TQM (Total Quality Management), Edward Deming, Peter Senge," said one superintendent. "They are important for understanding this process."

These superintendents have also needed to clarify their own value-driven reasons for beginning the process. One superintendent gave the following advice: "Figure out why you want to do school-based management. You need good reasons that go beyond, 'because everyone else does.' Do research and talk to others. Once you've figured out the reasons for moving to school-based management, then develop a value system for change that permeates the entire structure."

Finally, the Leadership Site superintendents are reflective practitioners. They work to educate themselves, as well as others. They built peer support networks and are participating in the state and national dialogue on education reform, as opposed to focusing only at home. The importance of this kind of support was explained by one superintendent: "It's been important for me to have a partner [another superintendent] who has gone through a strategic planning process and has fundamentally transformed a school system. For me, and I think probably for everyone in SBIP, being in this program with 97 other superintendents has been an important support. We don't get the staff development activities we should, in my opinion, so being exposed to the speakers at the SBIP Colloquia series is very important for us. The other superintendents, as well as the Department of Education through its work with the SBIP, have been a tremendous source of support. It's important for us to know that we are not alone. Being the superintendent is an even more lonely job than being a teacher."

Transforming education is a challenging and complicated process, as was reflected in the struggles and successes of the Leadership Sites in their first year. One superintendent summarized the challenges and learning:

> There's no magic formula for one district that can be duplicated in another place. One of the key things that I have learned is that we have to move from transformational leadership -- responding to the things that are in front you -- to transformational leadership -- creating a new environment in which schools can flourish and people can have a voice in what's happening in their schools. Top-down governance is dead. Bury it. You have to look at the conditions that exist, and then what are the things that you want to change. You can't change one thing at a time. You have to attack all of them at the same time. Collaboration is key. You have to bring people on board. You need to create the conditions in which the community demands a good education and is willing to pay for it. Never look back, always look forward.

PART FOUR: CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS OF A "CRITICAL FRIEND"

The preceding section described how the change process was experienced and interpreted by the participants. It focused on participants' reflections on the difficulties presented by the contemporary fiscal crisis in public school financing. It also addressed the challenge of changing ingrained cultural habits of hierarchical rather than decentralized authority on the part of administrators and autonomous rather than shared decision making on the part of teachers.

The autonomy of teachers does exist. The irony is that highly centralized patterns of authority can and do co-exist with a fair degree of individual autonomy for the workers in an organization. This is especially true in organizations such as school systems, which can be said to be "loosely-coupled" because, when the classroom door is shut, teachers are the de facto masters of their classroom.

This section offers the lessons drawn by an outside observer, the documenter and author of this study, who has functioned as a "critical friend" of the practices and sites described in this Report.

1. ***First observation**: The common theme that runs through all of the Leadership Sites and Lead Schools is a reduction in isolation.*

   There has been a reduction in:

   - The isolation of teachers from each other
   - The isolation of teachers from their building administration
   - The isolation of site administrators from central administration
   - The isolation of the school system from important stakeholders, especially business leaders, in the community
   - The isolation of the newly empowered teachers from the want-to-be empowered parents

   Many of the growing pains expressed in participants' observations in the preceding sections of this Report can be attributed to the fact that doing and deciding things together is much more complicated than doing things alone. Doing things alone is typical of formally hierarchical, yet "loosely coupled," organizations.

2. ***Second Observation:*** *Those who fear that decentralization and site-based management will foster fragmentation and more "parochial" school-centered thinking can take comfort from the experience of the SBIP Leadership sites.*

In fact, the reverse has happened. As a result of their participation in shared decision making structures created through site-based management, teachers have moved from a classroom (or grade-level) centered perspective to a schoolwide perspective; and from a school-centered to a districtwide perspective. As more teachers and parents become involved in decisions that used to be the unilateral prerogative of administrators, they are taking on the broad view that is typical of administrators. Newly empowered teachers and parents become more "public regarding" and less self-centered in their approach to decisions about their classroom, their grade level, and their school. The newly empowered teachers and parents are more sensitive to the "big picture" and act accordingly. Their empowerment builds commitment and cohesion rather than fragmentation.

3. ***Third Observation:*** *More control over site-based resources and empowerment creates a heightened sense of responsibility and accountability.*

All of the lead schools in the study felt the pressure to justify and explain how the changes they make in resource allocations and in **who has a say** in how resources are allocated will lead to better outcomes for pupils. Those who fear that decentralization and more school-site decision making authority are the necessary enemies of systemwide accountability should be reassured. Even in their first year, the SBIP lead schools felt a special pressure to justify what they were doing in terms of student outcomes. Being "free" to do certain things their way, these schools were no longer free to say that they were doing a good job simply because they complied with systemwide rules and objectives. They had to show results in terms of pupil outcomes.

4. ***Fourth Observation:*** *The reduction of isolation among teachers at different grade levels, between the school and its parents, and between the school and administrators in the school district produced greater internally generated, bottom-up pressures for accountability.*

As an administrator at the Shrewbury lead school put it: "We've opened the windows wide....We have had to become more self-critical and analytical. This helps us to meet the needs of kids better."

I.5. ***Fifth Observation:*** *Site-based discretion over resources and goals for staff development has led teachers to be more receptive to innovations.*

This receptivity was demonstrated in Fall River when a pedagogical innovation that the system had been proposing (not mandating) was accepted by a site-based team of teachers who felt empowered to either accept or reject the innovation.

6. ***Sixth Observation**: Actions to promote site-based management and reduce isolation have produced irreversible changes in district policies, school cultures, and individual attitudes and practices.*

Despite practitioners' frustrations that were expressed in the proceeding sections of this report, their actions indicate that once collegiality has been experienced, the school will never again be the same. Once participants develop a systemwide perspective, they never lose it. The most important change has been the creation of an irreversible momentum toward **an environment for change**.